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Macapagal-Arroyo regime

A fundamentally reactionary regime in transition to power

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The EDSA 2 people's uprising from January 16-20—like the EDSA 1 uprising—ousted a despised reactionary and puppet ruling regime. But the class dictatorship of the big comprador bourgeoisie and landlord class remains.

After the crooked Estrada regime had been driven away, the Macapagal-Arroyo government took over, promising to fight poverty, raise moral standards and improve the quality of politics by example. But whatever the difference between Estrada and Macapagal-Arroyo, they are both representatives of the reactionary ruling class. The basic big comprador and big landlord policies remain and prevail.

The Macapagal-Arroyo clique is still in the process of forming a new government, positioning itself and consolidating its hold on the reins of reactionary power and laying down its policies and programs. Within the new government itself, there are various reactionary factions and diehard as well as lukewarm supporters of Macapagal-Arroyo and there is a military bloc that is practically autonomous. The Estrada faction and its allies are still around, moneyed and with forces within and outside the civil and military bureaucracy and will most

likely maneuver against the new ruling regime.

The Macapagal-Arroyo regime is obliged to manifest—even temporarily or as a token measure—some value for the progressive and democratic forces that comprised the leading force in the people's uprising. It is also constrained to take into consideration the masses of the people who are restive due to a most intense socio-economic crisis and who are at the same time, militant and confrontational due to their participation in the uprising. Macapagal-Arroyo had hardly warmed her seat when the question of not repeating the failures of EDSA 1 became a prominent public issue.

Nonetheless, Macapagal-Arroyo relies mainly on the military bloc, the big bureaucrats controlling the former united opposition and now the dominant political camp, and the big business bloc based in Makati.

Due to their role in having deprived the Estrada clique of armed support at the last minute, aside from their powerful positions within the Lakas-NUCD, the reactionary military officials surrounding Ramos and de Villa stand out for having landed prominent positions and possessing the most clout within the new government. When Ramos said that EDSA 2 was better than EDSA 1, he was referring to the AFP-PNP's renunciation of Estrada without open factionalism and fighting.

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... even if the new government is still in the process of forming and establishing itself, the basic contradictions of semicolonial and semifeudal society are intensifying. Intense struggles continue in various arenas between revolutionary, progressive and democratic forces and various reactionary forces—whether within or outside the Macapagal-Arroyo clique.



As for the AFP high command in the new government, General Reyes immediately asked for a “dignified exit” for Estrada. He also sowed fear about the danger of further disorder and the alleged possibility that communists would exploit the situation. Even before the new government could take power and specify its policies, the AFP-PNP immediately intensified military offensives against the NPA and the BIAF. Right after Macapagal-Arroyo confirmed General Reyes’ retention as AFP chief of staff, she announced the appointment of Col. Victor Corpus as the new ISAFP chief. There is an indisputable intention to further intensify the war against the revolutionary forces.

Just as in the post-EDSA 1 situation, the intensified military offensive, anti-communist hysteria and intrigue, the stress on order above all else and even the armed threats from anti-Macapagal-Arroyo reactionaries will certainly be used by the military bloc to assert their counterrevolutionary agenda, block and eventually drive away any progressive element who might have been able to find his way into the new government and on the whole, assert its practically independent moves. In a time of quick transitions, the AFP-PNP has become even more ferocious and fanatic about defending the semicolonial and semifeudal system, attacking the revolutionary and progressive forces and thwarting mass struggles. Meanwhile, Macapagal-Arroyo has ceded the overall initiative on “security matters” to the military bloc.

The big bureaucrats within the Macapagal-Arroyo camp are composed of leaders of the former Aquino and Ramos regimes. Except for one or two, the same old faces are at the center of power. It is the old line of administration and the old catchphrases that are emanating from Malacañang. Even the most prominent item on the agenda of the people’s uprising—the elimination of corruption and cronyism—is in limbo because many of those who have been restored to power are themselves guilty of corruption and cronyism.

Even before these could take off, the reforms for which the people launched an uprising have already been

doused with cold water by bureaucrats and politicians more preoccupied with jockeying for positions, brokering deals and scrambling for the coming elections and hastening to return to business as usual. On this matter, they are one with the forces and elements who sow fear among the people about further disorder.

The big comprador bourgeoisie from Makati have also sustained damage due to the extortion rackets of the gangster Estrada clique. At the height of the anti-Estrada resistance, the most assiduous among them became obliged to cooperate with the impoverished masses. The extent of their participation in mass street protests is unprecedented. After Estrada’s ouster, they also manifested greater interest in issues of government reform compared to the big bureaucrats and politicians and military officials. But their overriding interest lies undoubtedly in restoring business, solving big financial problems, ensuring stability, attracting foreign investments and securing the blessings of the IMF-WB and the international monopoly banks.

Ever since “Juetengate” exploded, US imperialism quietly moved for a quick and peaceful resolution to the political crisis through impeachment. The US’ minions within the AFP and the PNP immediately spread out to ensure that the reactionary armed forces would remain intact. Early on, Washington had also warned against a seizure of power by the military and a collaboration between the reactionary opposition and the Left. After the uprising, the US quickly recognized the new government and attempted to assuage Estrada, even offering him asylum.

In taking power, the Macapagal-Arroyo government was confronted with a most intense crisis of the ruling system. Macapagal-Arroyo bears the advantages as well as the burdens of a president catapulted to power by a people’s uprising. The situation urgently demands decisive action and fearless initiatives. But it is Macapagal-Arroyo herself who has limited the reforms that could be expected and ensured that government policies would be made within the old reactionary framework. It is evident that

she considers the EDSA uprising merely as an “election through different means” and that she has not grasped the depth and intensity of the unrest that pushed the people to join the uprising. Without relevant reforms, the Macapagal-Arroyo government will quickly be exposed and subjected to a storm of protest and resistance from the people.

In any case, even if the new government is still in the process of forming and establishing itself, the basic contradictions of semicolonial and semifeudal society are intensifying. Intense struggles continue in various arenas between revolutionary, progressive and democratic forces and various reactionary forces—whether within or outside the Macapagal-Arroyo clique. The masses of the people are more confrontational and will surely intensify their struggle once the Macapagal-Arroyo regime becomes the leading extortionist and oppressor of the people instead of an advocate of the changes they desire.

CONVULSIONS IN THE RULING SYSTEM

The explosion and victory of the EDSA 2 uprising—15 years after the EDSA 1 uprising—prove that the crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system has not been resolved and continues to intensify. The convulsions that

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have wracked it from time to time are proof that the reactionary ruling class could no longer rule in the old way. These large-scale clashes are related in essence, to the continuing and gravely serious socio-economic crisis and worsening corruption of the semicolonial state. These are all symptoms of the rapid disintegration of an obsolete system that is on the verge of death.

Under the US-Estrada regime, the most aggressive remnants of the fascist Marcos clique were able to return to the center of power through a protest vote against the corruption and failure of the Aquino and Ramos regimes and the support of financiers of dubious reputation, that noticeably included a number of Filipino-Chinese or “Chinoys” who were close friends of Estrada. In the Estrada regime’s two-and-a half year rule, corruption, anomalies and extravagance gained even more prominence and a militarist, bullying and capricious mode of doing things prevailed—along with the blow dealt by the Asian financial

crisis. The person sitting in Malacañang was a bandit and national and social problems further worsened. With the people beset by such serious unrest, even the foremost pillars of reaction and conservatism like big business, the reactionary opposition and Catholic church leaders were pushed to join street protests and in the end, to extra-parliamentary struggle and to call on the AFP-PNP to turn its back on the elected president.

Rivalries among reactionaries could neither be moderated nor resolved through parliamentary and legal institutions and processes. Anti-Estrada reactionaries therefore took to the streets and allied with the progressive and democratic forces to suddenly and forcibly oust the Estrada clique. Thus, divisions within the ranks of local reactionaries further deepened. The anti-Macapagal-Arroyo reactionaries are preparing to retaliate even as they consolidate their power. The clout of the reactionary armed forces has grown bigger with such factional rivalries. Each faction maintains its own group within the AFP-PNP even as the mad scramble for spoils and power intensifies. Sudden twists and renewed clashes are likely.

The crisis of the ruling system is intense and further intensifying. Imperialist globalization is wreaking havoc on the severely weakened semifeudal import-export economy. In the past 15 years after EDSA 1, the Philippines was subjected to an increasing dose of privatization, deregulation, denationalization and liberalization. This is in accordance with the neoliberal impositions of US imperialism through the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. But instead of nearing, the promised development and progress have further slipped away.

The government and national economy are bankrupt and debt-ridden. The destruction of the forces of production is both widespread and serious. The livelihood and levels of living of the vast majority of the people have further plummeted. The masses’ backs are practically broken from the burden of intense suffering wrought by the incessant socio-economic crisis.

The ruling comprador and big landlord classes—including the Macapagal-Arroyo clique—do not have the courage to digress from or contradict the neoliberal dogma of international monopoly capital due to their blind obedience to the dictates of US imperialism. They rely foremost on investments and opportunities from overseas to lift the country from its moribund state. But the international capitalist system is mired in a worldwide crisis. Even US imperialism is beset with its own crisis and recession.

Despite the jubilation brought about by the victorious ouster of Estrada, the broad masses of the people are very much ill at ease and ever watchful. They do not see

any sign of determination or daring in Macapagal-Arroyo and her coterie of big bureaucrats and recycled politicians to try or fight for policies that are different from or contrary to the old, worn-out neocolonial formulas. Many are doubtful even of their ability to cleanse the stench of corruption that has been left behind by the gangster Estrada clique and renounce the militarist all-out war policy they have inherited.

The people launched an uprising because of their overwhelming anger and desire to be liberated from the pit of corruption, backwardness and hopelessness. If Macapagal-Arroyo will content herself with token solutions and palliatives, US imperialism and the big comprador-landlords in power may rejoice. But she will only worsen the crisis, anger the people and stoke the fires of raging rivalries and confrontations.

THE EDSA UPRISING AND THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

The EDSA 2 uprising, like EDSA 1, is not a social revolution. It neither resolved nor aimed to resolve the basic problems of US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. But it was a necessary response by the people to the reactionary and puppet Estrada regime's excessive corruption—amid a situation where this could not as yet be accomplished through thoroughgoing revolutionary means based on the actual level of the people's consciousness and practice and the actual strength of the revolutionary forces.

It was a broad and informal alliance on the whole of

initiative and struggle up to the giant march to Mendiola that drove Estrada away from Malacañang. Even before "Juetengate" exploded, the national democratic movement had already intensified protests against the US-Estrada regime and agitation to oust Estrada. They continued and purposely linked this struggle to burning national and social issues and struggles and to the need for comprehensive and revolutionary change.

In their attempt to deceive the people, the rabid anti-communists and reactionaries persist in erasing or obscuring the critical role played by the national democratic forces in EDSA 2. Or, they make it appear that Estrada's ouster through peaceful means is a renunciation—even by the revolutionary forces—of the people's democratic revolution and protracted people's war.

Whatever its limitations, the movement to oust Estrada is a heroic victory of the people's struggle and was able to advance the revolutionary process. The broad masses were aroused and mobilized in struggle and made ready for continued resistance. The disintegration of reactionary power is worsening due to the greed, corruption and treachery of reactionaries and the people's just resistance. The overall objective situation has become more excellent for the revolution's further advance.

To quickly oust Estrada, it was necessary for the legal movement and struggle in the cities to gain more prominence. The revolutionary forces correctly chose to seize upon the battle that had emerged to defeat the chief extortionist and oppressor, using all forces and viable



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forces from left to right that precipitated the massive legal protest action that was focused in the cities, called for the ouster or resignation of Estrada, mobilized hundreds of thousands and millions to go to the streets nationwide and eventually brought the AFP and PNP commands to its side. This way, the people were able to push for an immediate transition of power through peaceful means.

The national democratic movement comprised the biggest and strongest organized mass force of the movement to oust Estrada. It comprised the solid core of the protest movement and people's uprising that sustained the struggle in the streets, served as the main voice and mobilizer of workers, peasants, youth and students and the urban poor and steadfastly advanced the masses'

means based on the actual capability of the revolutionary forces and the actual level of consciousness of the broad masses. The alternative would have been to wait and become passive while the masses were advancing to confront their tormentor. In fact, the peaceful EDSA-type uprising is the highest level ever reached by the largely legal movement and struggle in the cities.

The people's democratic revolution through people's war, the armed and largely armed and illegal peasant movement and struggle in the countryside are partners and in harmony with the largely unarmed and legal movement and democratic struggle in the cities. Only the rabid reactionaries and revisionist renegades insist on saying that the two are at loggerheads.

Forming the broadest national united front and arousing and mobilizing millions of people are foremost requisites for advancing revolutionary victory. Without this, reaction cannot be isolated and weakened and the revolution cannot be expanded and strengthened. And neither could this be formed without expanding and strengthening the legal democratic movement in the cities. Thus, on the overall, an EDSA-type uprising is part of the long process of exposing and weakening reaction and strengthening the revolution.

Likewise, we must constantly and consciously struggle against parliamentarism, reformism and opportunism in the legal urban movement. We must also assiduously and systematically strengthen the urban movement's direct and indirect support to the armed antifeudal movement in the countryside because it is the latter's advance that shall be decisive for overall victory.

The armed revolutionary movement in the countryside performed an important task in resisting and weakening the despised Estrada regime. Estrada arrogantly rode

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roughshod over the peace talks and declared total war against the NDF-NPA and MILF-BIAF, thus accelerating the exposure and isolation of his much-loathed regime. With the intensifying blows dealt by the NPA and BIAF, it became a lot faster for the anti-Estrada reactionaries to remove Estrada.

With the intensification of crisis and the broadening of the protest movement, the NPA was able to recover from major setbacks and the damage it sustained in the past; guerrilla fronts quickly expanded and strengthened; and tactical offensives were stepped up nationwide. When "Juetengate" exploded, tactical offensives further intensified in Southern Tagalog, Bicol, Northern Mindanao, Southern Mindanao, Far South Mindanao and Eastern Visayas. Tactical offensives were also stepped up in other regions like Central Luzon, Ilocos-Cordillera, Cagayan Valley and Negros. These are all solid proof of the failure of the Estrada-Mercado-Reyes clique's "total war" and clearly prove the continually expanding and deepening mass support for armed struggle.

EDSA 2's victory presents undisputed proof that the revolutionary forces can—even if nationwide victory is

still far off—defeat one by one any leading puppet of imperialism and any chief reactionary sitting in Malacañang. Through similar repeated struggles, coupled with the revolution's continued and all-sided accumulation of strength, especially in arousing and mobilizing millions of people—the strategic balance of power between revolution and counterrevolution will change until objective and subjective conditions become ripe for a general revolutionary offensive.

OUR URGENT TASKS

We must do our utmost to transform the gains of the protest movement and people's uprising into solid and long-term revolutionary strength while maintaining the masses' high level of militancy and preparing them for bigger battles.

We must have a tight grasp of the intensity of the crisis of the ruling system, the masses' burning readiness for struggle and the broad linkages with the masses brought about by our leading role in the protest movement and



people's uprising. Steadfastly advance the masses' struggles based on their national and democratic welfare. Lead them along the correct revolutionary direction and further expand

and consolidate the progressive forces in all arenas and in all its aspects. While the reactionaries are preoccupied with jockeying for positions, the revolutionary forces must even more assiduously and more perseveringly be close to, immerse themselves among, and lead, the broad masses.

While the Macapagal-Arroyo regime is positioning itself and getting a hold on the reins of reactionary power, we must advance the people's demands, fight for reforms and expose the true reactionary character and policies of the new coterie of ruling reactionaries. Encourage the new government to grant relevant concessions that would redound to the people's welfare while criticizing and resisting its antinational, antimasses and anti-democratic moves and policies. Along with this, we must seize all chances and opportunities to strengthen the revolutionary forces.

For as long as they persevere along the correct revolutionary path, strengthen the progressive forces, deeply root themselves among the broad masses and advance the welfare and struggles of the masses of the people—the Party and the revolutionary movement can wield the initiative and continue advancing.

Following are our urgent and main tasks:

1 Reap the gains of the struggle against the US-Estrada regime

Nurture, further expand and further deepen our links with the millions who actively participated in and supported Estrada's ouster. Expand the revolutionary mass base in the countryside and cities.

Daringly broaden and strengthen the revolutionary mass organizations. It is time for the membership of the leading mass organizations to reach the tens and hundreds of thousands.

Consolidate the resign alliances to continue the militant struggle for justice and genuine change. Develop them in accordance with the line of people's democratic revolution.

Recruit and train thousands of mass activists and

advance the long-delayed prosecution of the crimes of the Marcos fascist dictatorship and other big and unresolved cases of corruption and cronyism.

3 Steadfastly advance the issues and struggles of the basic masses. Advance the line of people's democratic revolution.

While the issue of prosecuting unbridled criminality and corruption in government is being advanced, the reactionaries who are back in power are likewise using this to cover up other leading national and social problems currently raging.

In fact, the serious criminality and corruption in government—as proven in the impeachment process and “Juetengate”—further highlight instead of obscure the intense grievances of workers, peasants and other



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mobilize them towards further expanding in the fields of organization, propaganda and agitation. Recruit into the Party the most advanced and determined among them.

Pay particular attention to organizing workers, youth and students, the urban poor, peasants and professionals who were outstanding in their active participation in the struggle to oust the despicable regime.

Ensure the formation of our solid strength in the basic levels along with organizing on various other levels.

2 Advance the movement to prosecute and punish Estrada and his cronies.

We must handle this issue because it is the foremost objective of the masses who joined the uprising. It is through this that the average person shall measure the sincerity and legitimacy of the Macapagal-Arroyo government that the people's struggle had catapulted to power.

Despite Estrada's ouster, the broad masses fiercely object to any arrangement that would let Estrada and his cronies off the hook. Thus, the struggle to prosecute and punish Estrada forms a strong basis for sustaining the militancy of the broad masses, maintaining their vigilance over the new government and expanding the breadth of reforms and change.

This struggle may be further expanded to likewise

impoverished folk. This further stresses the urgent need for genuine and comprehensive change.

It is the obligation of the progressive forces to the broad masses and to themselves to clearly lay down and determinedly advance the line of people's democratic revolution. The advance of the people's independent strength and struggles depends on it.

In the open democratic movement, the 20-point list of urgent demands of the legal national democratic forces provides a good outline of the leading national and social issues in accordance with the interests and aspirations of the broad masses.

4 Strengthen and continue to expand linkages and cooperation with other progressive and friendly forces, groups and elements within and outside the reactionary government.

Despite big changes in the spectrum of political forces, we must strive to maintain and nurture to the best of our ability, the linkages that have been formed in the protest movement and uprising.

We must strengthen relations with our reliable and closest allies by strengthening alliances and inviting them, if possible, to join progressive mass organizations.

Maximize various types of formal and informal relations, continued exchanges and consultations, open and

clandestine cooperation and coordination with the broadest possible ranks.

Pay particular attention to reaching out to, and linking up with, progressive, democratic and friendly elements within the civil bureaucracy, AFP-PNP, mass media, business, the religious, the academe, the professions and other sectors.

Seize all chances and opportunities to position progressives in various sections and levels of the reactionary government. We must likewise utilize, in this regard, the coming electoral campaign .

Closely follow and observe the rapidly changing spectrum of reactionary factions. While continuing to isolate the rabid reactionaries and anticommunists in the ousted pro-Estrada camp, be vigilant regarding maneuvers and treacherous attacks by the rabid reactionaries and anticommunists that are among those who have returned to power.

5 Further expand and strengthen progressive propaganda and agitation.

Utilize various means to propagate to the broad masses the lessons of the protest movement and uprising against the Estrada regime from the point of view of the people and the revolution. The reactionary classes are definitely ahead in this matter and we must therefore exert extra effort. We must utilize and develop popular means such as video presentations, cultural presentations and others.

Pay greater attention and provide more people and resources to expand and strengthen revolutionary propaganda and political education. Continue with the mass propaganda and agitation among the public that was conducted at the height of the protest movement and uprising. Mobilize mass activists for this endeavor. Along with this, seriously develop the use of modern means of communication such as radio, television, the internet and others. Systematize liaison work in the established mass media to acquire added space for progressive forces.

6 Daringly expand and strengthen guerrilla fronts, further invigorate the antifeudal peasant movement and advance guerrilla warfare.

The victorious mass uprising has opened new opportunities for the further expansion of guerrilla fronts. We must take advantage of these opportunities and develop expertise in combining legal, semilegal and illegal means to daringly expand and advance peasant struggles and other mass movements in the countryside.

Through the correct and flexible disposition of the units and personnel of the NPA, they disperse for conducting mass work and expansion, concentrate to launch tactical offensives and shift positions to avoid enemy attacks. With the intensification of tactical offensives, especially in the last quarter of the previous year, the NPA was able to seize more arms, form new guerrilla units, deal stinging blows against the enemy, raise the morale and the militancy of the masses and the revolutionary forces and accumulate more experience and skills in launching big and small tactical offensives.

We must continue to launch tactical offensives to punish those who have incurred blood debts and committed major crimes against the masses and the revolutionary movement, eliminate armed elements that block the expansion and strengthening of the mass movement and guerrilla fronts and continue strengthening the NPA. In the new situation, pay greater attention to explaining to the public the target and objectives of each tactical offensive. Systematize and streamline the investigation, prosecution and propagation to the public of the crimes of those who have been punished, especially big and well-known targets.

The feudal and semifeudal exploitation of the peasant masses in the countryside is worsening. The reactionary government continually fails to implement genuine land reform and instead, advances programs and policies that are antipeasant and favorable to landlords, the big comprador bourgeoisie and foreign agribusiness monopolies.

The revolutionary mass base in the vast countryside can only consolidate and deepen by vigorously advancing antifeudal struggles, along with advancing various types of campaigns and mass struggles in the countryside.

Assiduously lay down and strengthen the political, organizational, military, cultural and economic requisites for the solid advance of the armed struggle to a higher level.

One of the foremost demands of the protest movement and people's uprising is the setting aside of the "total war" policy of the Estrada-Mercado-Reyes clique and the resumption of the peace talks. The revolutionary movement is in agreement and stands ready to resume peace talks with the GRP. The Party's line and policy on the peace talks have long been established and proven correct through experience. The Party's clarifications on this matter must be reviewed and propagated once more to the people's army and the mass movement.